

Washington, D.C. -- Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) voted for the Medicare Premium Fairness Act, which enjoyed broad bipartisan support when it passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 406-18. The bill which is endorsed by AARP, The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare (NCPSSM), and the Alliance for Retired Americans protects 11 million seniors from unfair increases in their 2010 Medicare Part B premiums and prevents similar increases in costs for states that pay these premiums on behalf of low-income seniors.

“This bill ensures that we do not increase costs for seniors at a time when their savings have been ravaged by Wall Street misdeeds and the savage recession that followed,” said Congressman Sestak.

Three quarters of seniors have their Medicare Part B premiums, which covers outpatient medical care, directly deducted from their Social Security. These seniors are protected from seeing a decrease in their social security payments, even if Part B premiums increase in a year when limited inflation does not cause a cost of living adjustment (COLA), which would increase Social Security payments. However, newly enrolled seniors, low-income seniors receiving assistance from states, and higher income seniors are NOT protected, and, without congressional action, would have seen as much as a 25% increase in their monthly premiums.

This bill protects all Medicare enrollees from an increase larger than the Social Security COLA, so that the 2010 Part B premiums will remain at \$96.40 and no seniors will see a cut in their Social Security checks. According to House Pay-Go rules, the bill would not add to the deficit. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Offices (CBO) estimated cost of the bill is \$2.8 billion for 2010, which is fully paid for using funds otherwise appropriated from the Medicare Improvement Fund established a few years ago to be available for the Secretary to investigate changes to Medicare benefits.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clintons Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government

from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.